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*Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)*

*Brownfields Success Stories*

# The Brownfields Job Training Pilot Program: Fulfilling the Commitment to Environmental Justice

## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE STORY

In October 1999, the Council on Urban Economic Development (CUED) released a study confirming that EPA's Brownfields Initiative is being put to use in the communities that need it most: blighted communities of racial and ethnic minorities and low-income citizens. With median incomes within Brownfields Pilot-targeted areas at 30 percent below the national average, the Initiative mirrors EPA's focus on the impact of environmental pollution on disadvantaged segments of society. The Agency defines environmental justice as the "fair treatment for people of all races, cultures, and incomes, regarding the development of environmental laws, regulations, and policies." As part of the Brownfields Initiative, EPA incorporates a strategy to address environmental justice as part of the economic restoration of communities affected by these sites.

The Job Training and Development Demonstration Pilot program is EPA's latest effort in its dual commitment to environmental justice and brownfields cleanup and redevelopment. Job Training Pilots, which are funded at up to \$200,000 each over two years, foster workforce development through environmental training while ensuring that trainees are recruited from disadvantaged communities.

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## JUST THE FACTS:

- Brownfields Job Training Pilots have an average retention rate of 76 percent once students begin training.
- Nearly 70 percent of Brownfields Job Training program graduates have found employment in the environmental field, with an average salary of more than \$13 per hour.
- EPA has also partnered with other federal agencies to promote job training for residents of disadvantaged communities in the vicinity of Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots.

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**EPA's** Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

By providing quality worker training, this initiative allows local residents an opportunity to qualify for jobs created as a result of brownfields cleanup and redevelopment efforts. To date, 37 Job Training Pilots have been awarded. These Pilots are located either within or adjacent to Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots, and facilitate cleanup of targeted brownfields while training residents impacted by these brownfields for employment in the environmental field.

Job Training Pilots are administered through local job training and educational organizations. Beyond the environmental training program provided through EPA's grant, many of these organizations use their own funding or leverage additional resources to offer life skills training and professional development services for enrollees. The training curricula range from three weeks to a year, and cover such diverse areas as environmental assessment, cleanup methods, innovative treatment technologies, environmental lab technologies, and environmental law, regulations and policy. To date, more than 550 participants have graduated. Overall, the Pilots have a retention rate of 76 percent for students that begin training. More than 380 of the programs' graduates have found employment in the environmental field—a placement rate of 69 percent—with an average salary of more than \$13 per hour.

Examples of successful Job Training and Development Demonstration Pilots include the Oakland Private Industry Council (Cypress Mandela Training Center) in Oakland, California, and the Young Community Developers program in San Francisco, California. The Council targets low-income and otherwise disadvantaged residents, specifically those that participate in the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program. The program has graduated 132 trainees in four 13-week training cycles, and eighty percent of the graduates found jobs within two weeks. The Young Community Developers program has graduated 24 participants, of which 16 are employed, earning an average of \$20 per hour. The Pilot has also built strong partnerships with local agencies, universities, unions, and private companies, and leveraged \$173,000 in funds and resources.

EPA has also partnered with other federal agencies to promote job training for disadvantaged communities in the vicinity of Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots. Memoranda of Understanding with the Departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs promote environmental workforce training programs in brownfields communities throughout the country. A partnership with the National Institute for Environmental Health Services (NIEHS) is leveraging additional job training opportunities for residents of Brownfields Pilot communities. EPA and NIEHS are working to ensure that Minority Worker Training Program grants, established to help develop training programs for minority youth, tie closely to ongoing activities in Brownfields Pilot cities. And a cooperative agreement with the Hazardous Materials Training and Research Institute (HMTRI), based in the Eastern Iowa Community College District, has expanded environmental training and curriculum development at community colleges located near Brownfields Pilots. HMTRI hosts workshops to assist community colleges and other job training organizations from brownfields communities in developing environmental job training programs, and provides follow-up technical assistance to help tailor programs to specific community labor market needs.

For more information on EPA's Brownfields Job Training Development and Demonstration Pilot program, contact EPA Headquarters at (202) 260-4039.

## CONTACTS:

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Visit the EPA Brownfields Web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>